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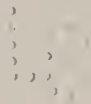
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Practical Golf

BY

DAVE THOMSON

Professional, Washington Golf and Country Club



DAVE THOMSON PUBLISHING CO.

ROSSLYN, VA.

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PRICE ONE DOLLAR



DEC 12 1923

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NATIONAL CAPITAL PRESS, INC., WASHINGTON, D. C.

220 /

FOREWORD

IT IS generally accepted that a book on golf, in order to correctly teach the game, must be accompanied by illustrations of the various strokes, diagrams of lines of play and so forth.

The author contends, however, that such will be the case only in instances where the posing individual (usually a man) is of relatively corresponding height and weight to the embryonic golfer.

He believes that *word* pictures are immeasurably more effective, in producing good results, than photographs or drawings, and, with confidence leaves the matter to the reader's judgment *after* the instructions contained in this book have been faithfully followed.

PART ONE

THIS section is intended primarily for beginners and is the result of several years' successful teaching by Dave Thomson, one of the leading golf players in Scotland and, at present, professional, Washington Golf and Country Club, Rosslyn, Va.

Careful and conscientious study of the instructions will enable the prospective golfer to play a fairly good game in remarkably short time and prepare the player for the proper understanding of Part Two of this book.

Having secured a driver or a brassie, provide yourself with a practice ball for outdoors or a cotton one for indoors or backyard, and proceed as outlined in the following pages.

Direction in Which Ball Is to Be Sent

This is accomplished by placing the club on the ground immediately behind the ball, with the hitting surface at true right angles to the objective. Many good shots are spoiled simply because the club has been faced in the wrong direction.

The Grip

Grip the club, about two inches from end of shaft, with the fingers of the LEFT hand, keeping the back of the hand showing so that the V formed by forefinger and thumb is pointing to right shoulder. The LEFT thumb should be pressed against the point where the right-upper corner of the shaft would be were it square instead of round.

Be certain you are gripping with the *fingers* and not with the *palm* of the hand, for this point will prove of great importance as your knowledge of the game increases.

Next, place the RIGHT hand on the club with the palm skywards, then grip the fingers around the handle and, if you have correctly followed the foregoing, the two V's formed by the forefingers and thumbs will be pointing in the direction of your right shoulder. Be conscious, from this point on, that *grip of fingers has not changed*.

The Stance

Set the feet about eighteen inches apart, having the right foot touching and the left foot about three inches behind an imaginary line from right toe to objective. Turn the left toe out

at an angle of 45 degrees. Bend head well down from neck and bend body forward at waist sufficiently to let the club head touch the ground. Duck the right shoulder slightly towards the right foot and keep both elbows fairly close to the body. Relax the right knee and ankle as, in order to reach lower with the right hand than with the left, the entire right side of body must be lowered. In this position the player is standing at address or addressing the ball preparatory to making a stroke.

The Backward Swing

This, in order to be correctly graceful, calls for the cooperation of six different movements, i. e., by the hands, arms, feet, knees, hips and shoulders, faulty action of any one of which may ruin

the result of the stroke. To take the club back properly, push the LEFT hand down and, at the same time, swing the arms to the right side of the body, then lift the hands in a semi-circle in the direction of the back of the head. Simultaneously, raise the left heel about one and one-half inches off the ground and bend the left knee towards the ball, being careful not to turn left heel outwards but only lift it. This bending of the left knee will enable your body to pivot around at the hips without moving the head out of place.

The Downward Swing

Commence the down swing with the idea of making your club head describe a complete circle, catching the ball at the point where the club head has reached the bottom of the arc. In hitting the ball, try to hit *on through*

the ball for about a foot, then allow the club to swing on and up in back of your head. During the down swing the body and foot movements are opposite to what occur while you are backswinging. As soon as you start the club down towards the ball, the right shoulder should begin working under and the right knee should commence to break towards the ball while the right foot must turn on the ball of the foot, raising the heel off the ground about three inches. At the impact your LEFT heel must be *solidly* on the ground and the left knee be in an almost tight position when the club hits the ball since it is the LEFT foot which receives the force of the blow and, unless it is flat on the ground at impact, your effort will be wasted. Careful attention should be given to make the club and foot movements in unison.

In General

1. The beginner should *never hurry the stroke*, and, by taking time, will find that the club will come around without any great effort. Coordination of movements is absolutely necessary, and it is impossible to execute them correctly by hurrying through the swing.

2. At all times keep your eye on the back of the ball until you have hit it on its way.

3. Patient practice is required to perfect the complete swing and, after learning to swing the club in a true circle, the beginner should concentrate on the action of the feet, knees, hips and shoulders. As the club is taken up on the back swing, the following movements take place *simultaneously*:

a. The LEFT heel rises off the ground.

- b.* The LEFT knee bends towards the ball.
- c.* The LEFT hip turns towards the ball.
- d.* The LEFT shoulder turns and very slightly ducks towards the ball.

The club at top of swing should be at the horizontal, the clubhead pointing towards the ground and the shaft being about three inches back of the player's neck.

4. Always remember that the head should be kept perfectly steady while making the body movements, and not swayed from side to side. This point is difficult for beginners, as they invariably try to get the weight of the body into the swing too early, thus causing swaying. Swing the arms and let the body follow.

5. The foregoing instructions cover the swing for the driver, which is the

club of longest range and calls for the longest and most perfect swing. They are applicable, however, with modifications, to the swing of all clubs necessary to the golf neophyte, and a brief account of them now follows.

The Brassie

The brassie is merely a driver with a brass plate attached to the sole of the club to assist in cutting through any grass in which the ball may be lying. In playing the brassie, directions for driver hold good except that you stand slightly nearer the ball and swing a trifle more upright, being sure to swing *on through* the ball along the imaginary line from ball to green. Use a firm finger hold, and endeavor to aim accurately. In fact, success with the brassie depends on guiding the club accurately to the ball, because you cannot get a

successful result if the clubhead hits the ground before reaching the ball.

The Midiron or Medium Club

This club is made of iron or steel with a shorter shaft than the driver or brassie. In playing the midiron, stand nearer the ball than when using a brassie, and adopt a slightly more open stance than that for the wood clubs. Swing a fairly upright circle and hit the ball from just between the feet. Make the club head hit the ball and the ground simultaneously, i.e., do not scrape the club along the ground, which causes it to touch the ground before reaching the ball whereby much of the effort is prematurely wasted. Be careful that the **LEFT** arm is not allowed to bend at the elbow in using the midiron, and, at impact, the **LEFT** heel must be on the ground.

The Mashie or Lofting Iron

This club is simply an iron with considerable loft, thereby enabling the ball to be lifted into the air, which is necessary in order to approach most modern greens. In using the mashie, keep the LEFT foot flat on the ground during the back swing, which should only reach the level of the shoulders, since the mashie does not require a full swing to be effective. Be sure that the LEFT arm is kept in an almost stiff position throughout the swing as, having the elbow and wrist too loose, results in a flubbed shot. Make the stance slightly more open than when playing the midiron and, the shorter the stroke, the more open should be the stance. Be sure the weight is on the LEFT foot at impact.

The Niblick

The niblick is used in sand traps, high rough grass and ditches, and has a large circular head, is fairly heavy, and is kept by most players as a sort of blasting tool. When the ball lies low down in sand, grip the niblick tightly, swing it like a mashie and try to hit the sand heavily about two inches back from the ball. Send the club on under the ball and through the sand, by doing which ball and sand will be forced together out of the hazard. In advanced golf, the niblick is often used in place of the mashie-niblick or pitcher, and many good players rely on the niblick for the short approach.

The Putter

This club is made of wood, iron, steel, brass or aluminum for the purpose of putting the ball into the small

four and one-half inch hole in the putting green. To putt successfully, place the putter immediately behind the ball, keeping the putter face perfectly square with the cup. Adjust your feet to suit the club and keep nearly all the weight of the body on the LEFT foot. In swinging this club, use the WRISTS only and keep the head and body perfectly still. Allow the putter head to follow after the ball for a short distance—eighteen inches approximately—which will tend to keep the ball running straight after it leaves the club. But, while following after the ball, be sure the club face is held square with the hole.

These hints will be of material assistance to anyone taking up golf, but are not intended for advanced players. They will suffice for the beginner until

such time as proficiency in elementary knowledge of the game is acquired, but it cannot be too strongly emphasized that, before commencing the study of Part Two, the preceding instructions should be *mastered thoroughly*, and this can only be attained by assiduous practice and then more practice.

PART TWO

Assuming that the reader has, either by assimilation of the instructions contained in Part One of this book or otherwise, reached the stage where he (or she) can apparently swing correctly, adopt a proper stance, use requisite coordination of movements et cetera, and yet not hit the ball accurately enough to obtain satisfactory results, it is evident that this must be due to errors in making the various strokes or shots used in the whole golf game. In the following pages, I will endeavor to outline the *causes* of the most common golf errors and attempt to give such information as may prove to be the *remedy* for the particular fault in question.

The Topped Shot

This, in my opinion, is the most inexcusable error in golf because it is the most easily corrected, and any player should cure it for himself if he but devote sufficient thought as to why the shot resulted in a topped ball. By topped shot or topped ball is meant that, in striking, the club head meets the ball *somewhere* above the center, thereby applying the driving power to the upper half of the ball, which tries to take a downward path and is only kept from doing so by the fact that the ground offers some great resistance, with the result that the ball bumps, bounds or rolls along the ground for a short distance into any yawning ditch or hazard that may be in the direct line of its path. Sometimes we say a ball has been half-topped, which means

that the power of the swing has been applied *just* above the center of the ball, resulting in a shot where it rises only a few feet from the ground. Occasionally, however, the half-topped ball nets great reward by running a considerable distance but, nevertheless, is the result of a badly executed swing and should be shunned.

The causes of topping are four in number:

1. *Raising the head and shoulders during the backward or downward swing.*

The elevation of the shoulders is thereby raised so that, when the club is swung towards the ball, the club and arms are not long enough to fit the distance between ball and left shoulder.

Correct this by concentrating on keeping the head well down during the

back and downward swings, and see to it that the shoulders do not rise higher during the swing than they were at the address.

2. *Shortening of the left arm at the elbow during the up or down swing.*

Obviously, if the left arm plus the length of the club fits the distance between back of ball and left shoulder it follows that, if during the up or down swing the player shortens the left arm by bending the elbow, the club plus the length of shortened left arm will not fit distance from back of ball to left shoulder but will probably be about two inches shorter and, accordingly, just about fit in between top of ball and left shoulder, resulting, thereby, in a topped shot.

The remedy in this case is to set the left arm almost straight at the address

and maintain the arm at same tension during the up and down swings.

3. *Standing too far in front of the ball.*

Here the club head meets the ball before the bottom of the swing or arc has been reached.

This fault is easily corrected by the player simply trying a few shots with the ball a little nearer the left foot or, in other words, move the ball forward a few inches.

4. *Standing too far behind the ball.*

In this case the club does not meet the ball until the club head has started on its upward flight on the follow through and is a common occurrence with those players who attempt to lift or scoop the ball into the air. The club reaches the bottom of the arc several inches before it reaches the ball and, as it has commenced to ascend

on the follow-through swing, the impact takes place near the top of the ball, which is forced down on to the ground.

Balls topped in this manner are good runners except where hazards intercept them.

To determine whether the top is due to this cause, move the ball gradually, in successive shots, from one to four inches nearer the right foot.

While these are the four reasons for strokes resulting in topped balls, the player may, unfortunately, be afflicted with more than one of them. However, by careful practice and real hard thinking, he can effect a cure for the habit.

The Skied Ball

(With the Driver)

By skying is meant that the power of the swing has been applied to the

under side of the ball whereby it is sent high in the air, oftentimes getting about half the desired distance and then, again, merely rising in the air almost perpendicularly, the distance forward being determined by the power of the swing and the point of contact.

The causes of skying are three in number:

1. *Lowering the shoulders during the up or down swing.*

In this case, length of club plus length of left arm is longer than distance between back of ball and left shoulder.

The cure consists in concentrating on keeping head and shoulders at same elevation during swing as when at address.

2. *Bending the knee too much during the up or down swing.*

The shoulders are in consequence lowered, resulting again in the club plus length of left arm being too long to fit distance between back of ball and left shoulder.

Correct this fault by concentrating on knee action, being careful that the knees do not sag too much.

3. *Losing balance by falling forward on the ball.*

This is mainly the result of standing too far away from the ball at address, causing the player to reach too far forward in hitting, as a consequence of which he first gets on to the toes of both feet, then loses his balance and falls forward while the club head buries itself in the ground under the ball.

Correct this fault by standing suffi-

ciently near the ball to allow the end of the club shaft to rest just above the knee cap and keep the weight of the legs well back on the heels, making sure that the left heel is on the ground when the club hits the ball. Finally, keep the head steady, with the eye fixed on that part of the ball where the impact occurs.

Slicing with the Wood Clubs

The causes are four in number:

1. *Hitting the ball while the face of the club is lying off or, as some say, hitting with the face of the club too open.*

The face of the club has three sections—*toe*, *center* and *heel*. The *toe* is that part of the hitting face farthest from the player, the *center* is the middle section which is sometimes fitted with ivory, steel or fiber, while the *heel* is that part nearest the player

—the whole constituting the striking face of the club.

In this case, the heel of the face instead of the center meets the ball, resulting in a decided slice and, if the face of the club is tilted back somewhat or lying off, the slice will be very pronounced. Heeling is simply a slight over-reach.

To correct this, attend to the arms, which have been swinging too loose, while the elbows have been allowed to swing too far from the body. Keep the right elbow well into the body during the up and down swing, for one cannot over-reach if the elbow is kept close to the body.

2. *Hitting the ball from outside to inside of the line.*

Imagine a line from ball to green; then, if the club comes to the ball from outside of that line, it will necessarily

finish inside the line, thereby drawing the face of the club across the ball from out to in and, in so doing, produce a side spin to the ball which will travel in the direction of the spin, i. e., slice. This error is often occasioned by standing too near the ball, but in most cases is due to swinging with a loop, which condition is very difficult to cure where the victim has been looping for any length of time.

To remedy it, be sure that the club comes to the ball on the same plane as when going back, i.e., make the club go back and come down in the same groove.

Good results are often obtained by trying to hit out across the ball—that is, hit from inside the imaginary line to outside, having club cross the line at the ball. In the down swing, keep the club close to the right shoulder as long

as possible; then the club will travel to the ball from inside the line.

3. *Left hand too far under the club shaft and gripping with palm of left hand.*

In this position, the left wrist will collapse at impact, thereby causing the club to be drawn across the ball from out to in.

Correct this by gripping the club in the fingers of the left hand, the first three knuckles showing, and having the V formed by the forefinger and thumb pointing to right shoulder. The left wrist should be firm at impact, enabling the club head to follow on after the ball. The left wrist receives the shock in hitting and should be firm at impact.

4. *Pulling away the left foot at impact.*

As the club head meets the ball, the left foot is drawn away from it, with

the result that the club is drawn across the ball from out to in, producing a slice. I have seen balls pulled where the left foot was drawn away at impact but only in cases where the player was guilty of a complication of faults. Drawing the left foot away at impact will produce a slice, provided the club face is held square with the ball, but when the club face is turned in it is possible to produce a pull.

To remedy this defect, practice having the left foot flat on the ground at impact and bring the greater portion of the body weight onto the left leg on the follow through. Be sure the left heel is flat on the ground at impact, and try to make the weight of the right side of the body and the club head work together—always towards the ball.

Slicing may also be the result of faulty feet, knee, hip or shoulder work,

but would then be merely a combination of errors which would still cause the club head to do the same thing, i. e., cut across the ball from outside to inside the line. It is the player's duty to find which particular fault is the cause of the slice and remedy it accordingly. If the head is kept steady with the shoulders at a uniform elevation, he will soon discover the particular cause of slicing in his case.

Pulling or Hooking

The causes are four in number.

1. *Having the ball too near the left foot, which foot itself is in advanced position.*

All of which means that the player, standing well behind the ball with the right foot drawn back, swings the club from inside the line to outside, crossing the line at the ball. This swing will

result in a pull or hook, provided the club has been held correctly. Many good drivers stand and hit in this manner, but it is ruinous in iron play.

To correct the pull in this case, draw the left foot back on a line with the right foot and play the ball from inside the left heel. Straight driving will quickly follow.

2. *Turning the club face in towards the ball at impact.*

This habit is due to having the right hand too far under the club handle so that, at impact, the right hand is turning the club face into the ball too abruptly, which causes a pull or hook.

To remedy this state of affairs, be careful that the V formed by the forefinger and thumb of right hand is pointing towards the right shoulder and not towards the right hip.

3. *Poor manipulation of body weight.*

If, at impact, the left hip is pulled suddenly away from the ball, you will cause yourself to swing as if you were trying to hit around a corner.

As a matter of fact, this is not an actual pull but is a ball driven in the wrong direction and, to overcome it, bring the weight of the right hip into the ball with the club head and be sure that you are well up on the ball of the right foot at finish of swing. In this way the left hip cannot be drawn back from the ball, but, if afflicted with the habit, you should secure the services of a professional to watch you swing and have the fault corrected.

4. *Standing too far from the ball.*

The player is thereby caused to swing too flat and nearly always hits the ball with the toe part of the club face, producing a pull or hook.

Overcome this by standing a little nearer to the ball and swing in a more upright circle. In addition, try to hit the ball with the center of the club face.

Passing now from the causes of faulty strokes, the description of which it is hoped has enabled the reader to detect his faults—and who is without them—I shall proceed to elaborate on the golf swing.

Timing the Stroke of the Wrists in Driving

All successful shots depend on proper timing with the wrist, and it is from the effort of the wrists that long distance is attained. During the up or backswing, the wrists bend immediately? the swing is commenced, and the club is carried from its position at right hip

by means of the arms alone until the top of the swing is reached. The down swing is commenced by the arms, with the elbows leading until a point opposite and to the right of the right thigh has been reached, when the wrists, with quick, accelerated movement, drive the club head on to and through the ball, continuing this drive up as high as the left shoulder, whereupon the arms again take control and carry the club head back over the left shoulder. This is one of the most difficult points to master in the golf swing and is very essential to long distance. Most pupils use the wrists on the down stroke too early in the swing, with a resulting waste of effort before the club head reaches the ball. In order to attain correct timing a good method is to take the club back with the wrists only, going no higher than the right thigh, from which point,

swing with the wrists and hands on to and through the ball—at all times keeping the left elbow in a well straightened position. After practicing this for some time, try taking the club back as high as the right shoulder and, while swinging down, let the elbows lead until the right thigh is reached—then bang into the ball with all the power of the hands and wrists. Provided you are swinging correctly on the down swing, you will notice that the club shaft remains close to the right shoulder until the wrists begin to make their effort. The speedier the wrists at impact, the greater will be the distance obtained. Therefore, do not make the wrists drive *too soon* during the down swing. Attempt at all times to feel the club head on the end of the shaft, as this will assist you in timing the wrist and hand effort.

Bear in mind that the special function of these members is to bring the club head from behind round on the ball, but at the same time do not bring the club head to the ball too early in the swing for, inasmuch as the club head is farthest removed from the ball at top of swing, it must necessarily be last to reach the ball on the down swing, which readily explains why you should let the elbows lead on the down swing and keep the club head back until the right thigh is reached—*then* and *then only* get in your wrist and hand work.

The Midiron Swing

The midiron should be of fairly upright lie and medium length of shaft with a fair degree of loft, while the weight of the club should depend upon the strength of the player's wrists.

Demanding an upright swing, it is important that the shaft be not too long. Set the club face at right angles to the line of play, keeping the ball about midway between the feet. Stand with the right foot advanced about four inches, making sure that the left wrist and elbow are straight and stiff. Next, place the club in such position that it and the left arm act as a unit, i. e., as if the club was a continuation of the arm.

The whole success of the stroke depends on the **LEFT** wrist and arm, both of which must remain stiff until the ball is on its way. After hitting the ball, allow the clubhead to follow, as far as the arms can reach, along the line from ball to green. Occasionally the expression is heard "a wrist shot with the midiron," which does *not* mean that the swing is from the

wrists only but *does* mean that the swing is made with a short, stiff-wristed swing. Take care that the bottom edge of the club is at right angles to line of play, as this line is the only one from which you can judge direction. Grip the midiron firmly at all times, and keep the head and shoulders at an even elevation during the entire swing.

The Mashie, Full Stroke

Play the ball from a point directly between the feet and stand with the right foot advanced about four inches. Be sure that the club and left arm are acting as one unit, and keep the right elbow close to the body during the entire swing. As with the midiron, so with the mashie; success depends on the left arm and wrist and, in hitting, make all the effort a downward hit

from the top of the swing to the ball. This will insure hitting the ball on the down swing as a consequence of which the club will not enter the turf until it has first hit the ball on its way. As in playing the midiron, allow the club-head to follow along the line of flight as far as the arms can reach.

Socketing is a very common fault in playing the mashie, and is caused by overreaching the ball as also by using too much pivot in mashie play.

To cure overreaching keep the elbows against the body on the up swing and until the club has hit the ball.

To overcome excessive pivoting in mashie play, keep the left heel flat on the ground on up swing, and swing the club head in an imaginary line from back of ball to green. This is very effective in curing overreaching with a mashie, so practice it carefully.

To insure proper direction with the mashie, be sure that the bottom edge of the club is at true right angles to line of play.

Niblick Play

The niblick is played ordinarily the same as the mashie with the exception, that, when in heavy loose sand, the player must aim at a spot about three inches behind the ball and endeavor to make the club head plow its way through under the ball, scooping out a lot of sand with the ball. This is a stroke which calls for great strength in the wrists to carry the club on through the sand. Grip tightly when using the niblick.

The Putter

Successful putting is the result of practice, but necessary qualifications are good eyes, delicate touch and un-

ruffled nerves. This is one department of the game where mind triumphs over matter, for, if we can only make the muscles obey the commands of the mind, we can all be first class putters. Place the putter back of the ball with the club head at true right angles to line of play and then set the feet about twelve inches apart, with the greater portion of the body weight on the left foot. The ball should be at a point about opposite the left heel. Take the club back in a direct straight line from the ball by means of the left wrist only, and, still keeping the club head on the direct straight line from ball to hole, hit it forward with the right hand, at the same time letting the left wrist sag. During this swing the control changes from left hand on back swing to right hand on forward swing, which is the only true swing for the putter. It ap-

pears incorrect to say the control changes from one hand to the other, but careful study will prove the correctness of this statement.

The Run-Up Shot

Use the midiron, mashie iron, jigger, or mashie. Stand slightly in front of the ball and play the ball from a point about two inches inside the right heel.

Keep the left arm and wrists very stiff and, as the club meets the ball, roll the club face into the ball, and, on the follow through, keep the club head over the line from ball to flag. A little practice will soon develop perfection in this stroke.

Backspin Stroke with Mashie Niblick

First or proper method as used by the great majority of expert players.

Play the ball from a point almost opposite the left heel, stand with the



feet very open so that the club can be drawn across the ball from out to in. Lay the club face well back and stand as if aiming at a point about ten yards to left of play, and hit with a firm, stiff-armed swing. Keep the club head low after hitting the ball, and make sure the club face is kept open during the entire swing.

Second method of playing the backspin shot with mashie, mashie niblick or any well-lofted face club.

This is the stroke where the ball is projected high in the air, the idea being to make the ball drop perpendicularly so that there will be little or no forward run. Stand with the feet fairly open, that is, right foot advanced and left foot drawn back from line of flight, with left toe pointing to left of objective. Keep the club face open

and swing decidedly upright, i. e., make the club head swing from bottom to top of arc. The wrists, in this stroke, are allowed plenty of action, especially at impact, for at this point the wrists should be trying to turn the club head quickly up on the follow-through swing. That means, as soon as the club head has reached the ball, the wrists endeavor to carry the club head skywards, thereby projecting the ball into the air. This is a very delicate stroke and requires great concentration and should not be attempted by inexperienced players, since it is seldom resorted to even by the experts, who depend more on the stiff-wristed backspin stroke.

Remember it is not the ball that flies highest which has the most backspin. The low traveling stiff-armed backspin stroke is the better stroke to

use in instances where a backspin shot is required.

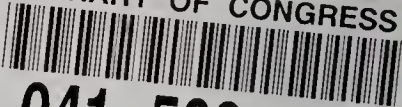
In playing the short approach backspin stroke, many golfers frequently complain of hitting the ground before reaching the ball. This is a fault caused mainly by too loose wrists, resulting in the left wrist collapsing before the club head has reached the ball.

When a beginner is unable to make the club head connect squarely with the ball, the fault is either the pupil has not sufficient strength in his wrists and hands to guide the club accurately, or he has not played for a sufficient length of time to develop the touch in hand and wrists.

Many ladies are victims of this habit for the reason that their wrists are too weak to control the club.

In conclusion, to those readers of this little book who are desirous of becoming golfers in the true acceptance of the word, I would reiterate that success will only be achieved through persistent practice, sincere study of the fundamentals and a great deal of hard thinking.

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